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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 28 | Min 20 | Humidity 75% Generally cloudy sky with Light rain Sensex 83,432 | Nifty 25,461 | Gold 98,830 | Silver 1,10,000 | Dollar 85.39 | Euro 100.45 | GBP 116.77

HAWK AI

Artificial intelligence-powered surveillance cameras to be installed across state highways in ₹70-crore initiative

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ALL THAT GLITTERS

As gold prices soar past ₹1 lakh for 10 grams, brides ditch 22K to go for 18K and 14K options for affordability and design reasons

PAGE 5

As school transport vehicles form chunk of 7,900 booked for carrying excess passengers till June this year, experts urge strict enforcement to ensure the kids are all right

PACKED LIKE SARDINES

PIC FOR REPRESENTATION PURPOSE ONLY

Shortage of affordable transport options proves challenge for parents

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In a concerning revelation, the Bengaluru Traffic Police have booked 7,918 vehicles for carrying excess passengers until June 2025, with a significant number of these being school vans and autos transporting children. Despite repeated awareness drives and warnings, the dangerous trend of overloading continues unabated on the city's already chaotic roads.

Traffic police officials say that many of these overloaded vehicles are school transportation services, auto rickshaws and vans crammed with children beyond their permitted seating capacity. In some cases, autos meant for four passengers were found carrying as many as 8 to 10 children, putting young lives at grave risk.

"This is not just a violation of traffic rules, it's a question of safety. Overloaded vehicles are more prone to accidents, especially during peak hours when roads are congested," said a senior traffic officer. "Despite our regular enforcement drives, the problem persists."

Citizens have expressed alarm over the indifference of drivers. "Are parents watching how their children are being ferried to school?" a person asked on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

> **"The autos should be designed to take the children safely with proper seating, protection, doors and grills for children to be safe and not fall out**
>
> — Vinod Jacob, Namma Bengaluru Foundation

Tables have turned

Copious amounts of rain this year has improved groundwater table in 6 B'luru taluks

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Excess rainfall this year appears to have improved the groundwater table in six out of nine taluks of Bengaluru.

The monthly groundwater levels recorded by the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Management Centre (KSNDMC) show that in May, the water table improved in Anekal, Hoskote, Doddaballapur, Bengaluru North, West, and South taluks. While Dodaballapur witnessed a rise in the groundwater table of 0-2 metre below ground level, it surged in the range of 2 to 4 metre below ground level in the rest of the five taluks.

Experts say the surge in the water levels in shallow aquifers may be due to excess rainfall during pre-monsoon this year. May 2025 broke all previous records for rainfall in that month and was recorded as the wettest May ever. Before that, Bengaluru weather took a rainy turn in April, when pre-monsoon showers lashed the city. According to the Indian Meteorological Department, the city recorded 50% excess rain in April.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Theatre magic

Courtyard Koota is presenting Girish Karnad's 'Wedding Album', a play that uses humour and insight to explore the complexities of modern Indian life, tackling issues of caste, gender, and tradition. **Where: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar; When: July 30, 7.30 pm**

02 Vocal point

SOCIAL is introducing 'Midweek Karaoke Nights' where guests can sing everything from nostalgic Bollywood hits to crowd-favourite pop anthems. Electronic City and JP Nagar outlets will be hosting weekly sessions led by local karaoke mainstay Nick Jose. **Where: E-City SOCIAL: Wednesdays, JP Nagar SOCIAL: Thursdays; 8 pm onwards**

03 Hall of mirrors

The Purple Turtles is presenting 'A Festival of Mirrors', a curated showcase of sculptural, handcrafted mirrors that celebrate heritage, form, and function. **Where: The Purple Turtles, Indiranagar; When: June 25 to July 9, 10.30 am to 8 pm**

04 Opera reimagined

A first-of-its-kind all-male pop opera is bringing together over 100 male vocalists from across the city, creating a rich sonic landscape that redefines how musicals are experienced in India. **Where: Good Shepherd Auditorium, Shanthala Nagar; When: July 17 to 19**

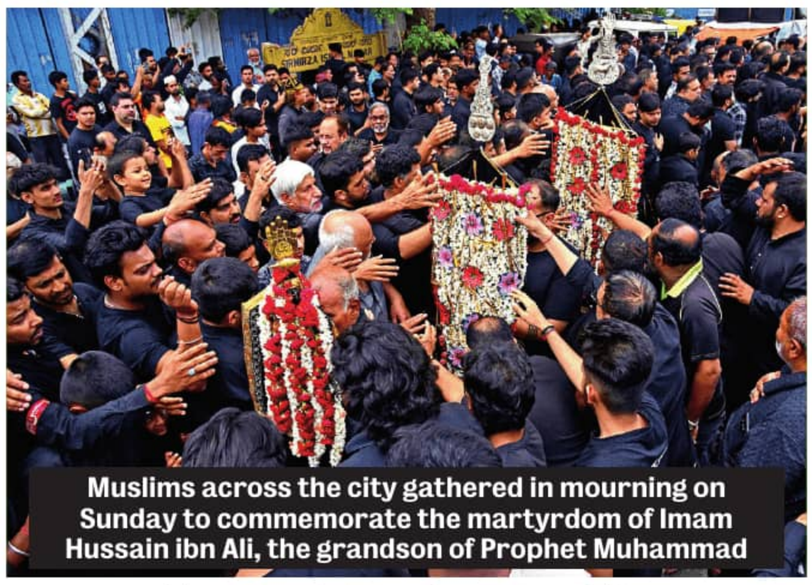
05 Beat drop

Mika Singh, known for his countless iconic hit songs, is set to take the stage and mesmerise the audience with his lively music. **Where: ZOZO The Club, Sanjay Nagar; When: July 19, 7 pm**

Muharram observed with deep reverence

Muharram procession in Bengaluru commenced from Tannery Road and concluded at Johnson Market, with streets lined with black flags and banners

As the Islamic New Year begins with the arrival of Muharram, the city of Bengaluru witnessed sombre and heartfelt observances across various neighbourhoods, particularly in areas like Johnson Market, Shivajinagar, Tannery Road, and Frazer Town. Muharram, the first and one of the most sacred months of the Islamic calendar, is marked by deep mourning, reflection, and remembrance, culminating in the observance of Ashura on the 10th day, which was on Sunday.



Muslims across the city gathered in mourning on Sunday to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain ibn Ali, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad

Significance of Muharram and Ashura

On the 10th day of Muharram in the year 61 AH (After Hijrah), corresponding to October 10, 680 CE, Imam Hussain ibn Ali, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, was martyred along with his family and 72 loyal companions. Imam Hussain refused to pledge allegiance to Yazid ibn Muawiyah, whose rule was marked by corruption and injustice. In response, Yazid's forces surrounded Imam Hussain's caravan in the desert of Karbala, denied them access to water, and ultimately killed them. His courageous stand against tyranny is remembered as a timeless symbol of sacrifice, justice, and unshakable commitment to truth in Islamic history.

Fasting during Muharram, especially on the 9th and 10th days, is regarded as a virtuous act. These days hold spiritual significance for Muslims around the world, who observe them with reflection, prayer, and remembrance. Muharram is also one of the four sacred months in Islam, during which acts of violence and warfare are strictly prohibited, highlighting its sanctity and the importance of peace.

Muharram in the city

For Muslims across the city, Muharram is not just the beginning of a new year but a time to honour the sacrifices made at the Battle of Karbala over 1,300 years ago. The tragic martyrdom of Imam Hussain ibn Ali, along with his family and 72 companions, is at the heart of these commemorations.

In Bengaluru, the Muharram procession commenced from Tannery Road, passed through Shivajinagar, and concluded at Johnson Market, one of the city's key hubs for Ashura observance. Streets along the route were lined with black flags and banners, and loudspeakers played elegies recalling the sorrowful events of Karbala. Mourners, both on foot and on decorated vehicles, carried tazias (symbolic replicas) of Imam Hussain's tomb and engaged in rituals expressing grief and solidarity. The procession also witnessed groups performing matam (ritual chest-beating), a traditional act of mourning in remembrance of the sacrifices at Karbala. In addition to the symbolic rituals, community members actively participated by distributing water and sharbat, commemorating the hardship and thirst endured by Imam Hussain and his companions.

Imam Hussain's sacrifice is remembered as a powerful act that protected the true values of Islam, that is, humanity, truth, and justice. His stand against injustice continues to inspire people around the world to speak out against oppression. Every year, millions of Muslims visit his shrine in Karbala, while others remember him by holding mourning gatherings (majlis), sharing water and sharbat, and honouring the 72 companions who stood by him.

Paint town green on 87th birthday

An awareness programme on home composting was organised in Kumara Park West on Saturday, as part of the 87th birthday celebrations of NS Ramakanth, who has been playing a vital role in educating people on the importance of segregating waste at source.

"Many residents have already begun handing segregated waste to the people who collect waste from door-to-door. However, the segregated waste is being mixed with other waste, thus defeating the purpose of segregating waste at source," said Ramakanath.

On the occasion of his 87th birthday, Ramakanth invited Ravindra Karnad of Prudent Eco Systems to provide a demonstration of home composting.

"I thought the demonstration of home composting will be a great help for the residents who want to convert wet waste into compost," said Ramakamth, highlighting that the compost can be used as manure for plants and saplings at rooftop gardens. "The residents, who do not have such a facility, can also hand over the manure to the nearby park," he said.

The residents also felicitated Ramakanth on the occasion. Appreciating Ramakanth for his contribution to the city, Kumara Park Residents' Welfare Association Secretary Chitra Venkatesh said the demonstration was a great help for her.

— Y Maheswara Reddy

BBMP school students still await uniforms and shoes

Even a month after the academic year began, students of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP)-run schools and colleges are yet to receive their uniforms, shoes, and socks. Due to delays in the supply process, they are likely to wait another month for these basic essentials. The BBMP operates 93 nurseries, 17 primary schools, 35 high schools, 20 PU colleges, and 6 degree colleges across the city, catering to over 22,000 students. Despite schools reopening 35 days ago, the civic body has failed to distribute uniforms and footwear to enrolled students.

According to officials, tenders were initially invited for the supply of uniforms and shoes, but contractors failed to bid properly. As a result, the process had to be re-tendered. Authorities now claim that distribution will begin only after completing the new tender process and taking individual measurements of students. While admissions are open until July 31, parents are demanding immediate distribution to students who have already enrolled and are attending school. "Let the current batch of students get their uniforms and shoes now. The rest can be covered in a second phase after the final admission date," said Soman Gowda, a parent of a BBMP school student. Officials, however, insist that many students are yet to enrol and that distribution will be done in one go after measuring all students post-admission. **— BMB**

State plans to expand women's 'Akka Force'

Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar has announced plans to expand the 'Akka Force'—a women's police initiative introduced in Bidar—to all districts of Karnataka, citing its effectiveness in ensuring women's safety. The minister said the initiative has served as a model for addressing women's issues and enhancing their security. She added that discussions will soon be held with the Home Minister to implement similar units across the state. The minister said that officials have been instructed to closely monitor and crack down on child and women trafficking, as well as begging rackets. Addressing the issue of egg distribution in the district, she said that steps will be taken to ensure timely disbursal of funds to child development committees. **— BMB**

Contract workers demand job safety, better wages

The Government and Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) Non-Permanent Workers Joint Forum on Sunday organised a convention at Gandhi Bhavan against labour codes and the exploitative contract labour system, whilst demanding the repeal of anti-worker labour codes. Clifton D' Rozario, Vice President of the All India Central Council of Trade Unions (AICCTU), said that workers who are, in fact, permanent workers are being falsely termed as contract employees and subjected to exploitation. "Despite performing core and perennial tasks, they suffer from job insecurity, poor wages, and lack of social security. The new Labour Codes only make matters worse, by institutionalising this exploitation," he said.

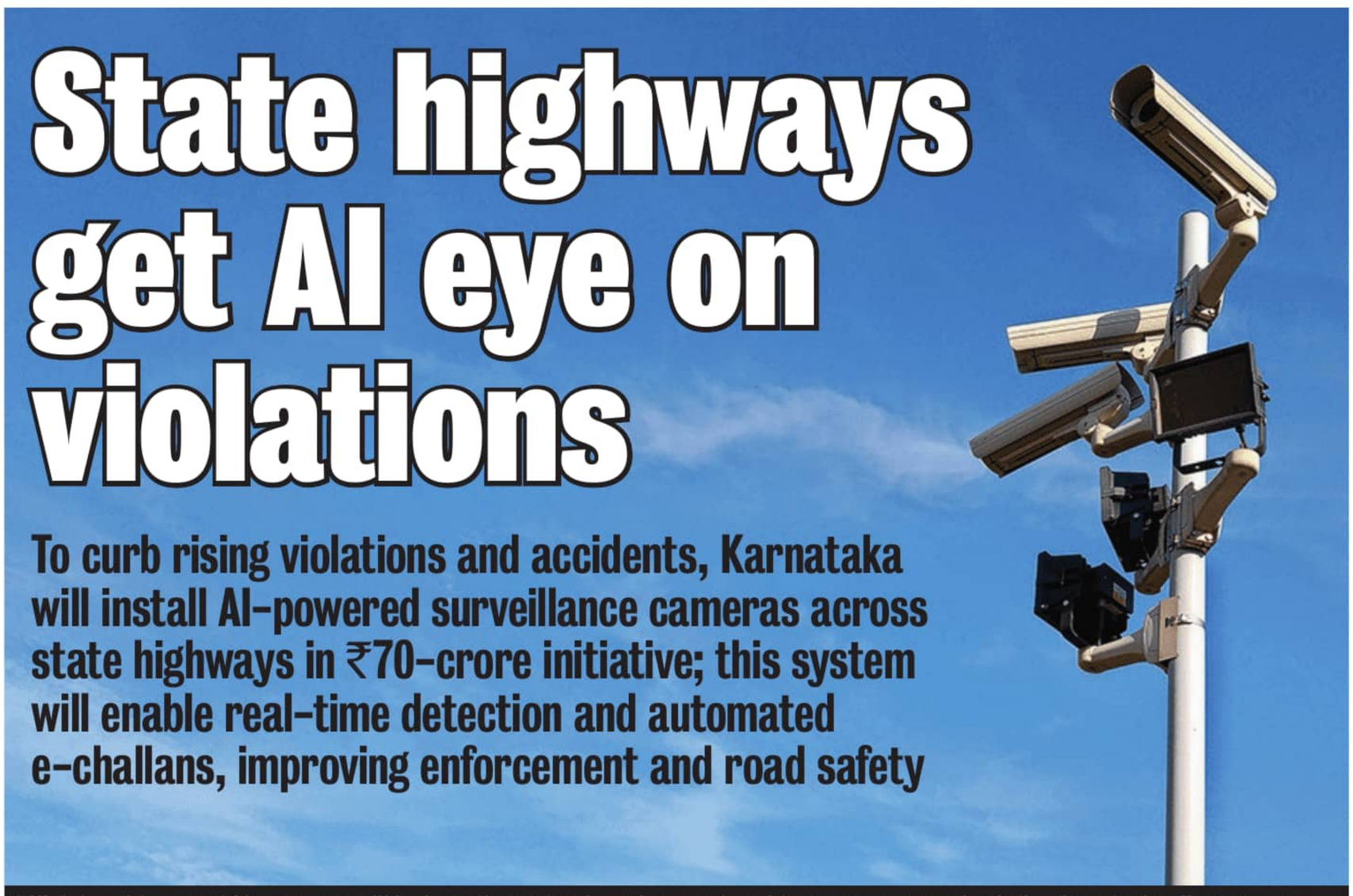
Vijayakumar, General Secretary of the HAL Contract Workers Association, opined that workers in Union Government institutions and PSUs have dedicated their lives to public service. "We now have no choice but to come together and fight this exploitative system. We will not be silenced anymore," he said.

Chandrashekar, Working General Secretary of the HAL Contract Workers Association, highlighted that the last revision of Central Minimum Wages was in 2017, even though the Minimum Wages Act mandates revision every five years. "The cost of living has skyrocketed. Forcing workers to survive on outdated wages is equivalent to forced labour. We demand a minimum wage of Rs 42,000 per month, and an immediate revision," he said.

— BMB

State highways get AI eye on violations

To curb rising violations and accidents, Karnataka will install AI-powered surveillance cameras across state highways in ₹70-crore initiative; this system will enable real-time detection and automated e-challans, improving enforcement and road safety



Officials said around 60 cameras will be installed at key junctions and accident-prone spots in 10 districts during first phase

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In light of rising cases of road rule violations, including speeding, not wearing helmets, and dangerous driving on Karnataka's highways, the Transport Department is set to deploy AI-powered surveillance cameras across major state highways. These high-speed corridors, particularly around urban stretches, have become increasingly prone to reckless driving due to sparse enforcement and wide, open roads that encourage speeding, a key contributor to accidents.

To address this, the department is launching a 70-crore project aimed at improving road safety and ensuring stricter compliance with traffic regulations. The initiative will roll out in three phases and include the installation of cutting-edge, artificial intelligence-enabled cameras that will detect violations in real time and trigger automated e-challans for offenders.

> **"With rising accidents and violations being reported on highways, traffic police raised this issue, prompting decision to implement AI-powered surveillance**–Ramalinga R, Transport Minister

As per officials, in the first phase, approximately 60 cameras will be installed at key junctions and accident-prone stretches across 10 districts. These include major points such as Ramanagara on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway, Srirangapatna, the Bengaluru Airport Road, Attibele, Hosapete, Nelamangala, and the Parle-G junction on Tumkur Road.

The AI systems will be integrated with a newly established command centre designed to monitor live feeds, identify rule violations, and instantly process penalties. Authorities believe this automated surveillance network will act as a strong deterrent against rash driving, while also improving enforcement efficiency.

Increased traffic violations prompted installation

"With rising incidents of accidents and traffic violations being reported on highways, the traffic police raised this issue with us, prompting the decision to implement AI-powered surveillance for better highway monitoring," Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy told BM. He added that funds for the first phase have already been allocated, and the cameras will be installed at locations identified in coordination with the traffic police.

Subsequent phases of the project will extend coverage to 20 more critical locations based on accident and traffic violation data, in consultation with local police and traffic experts. The project, fully funded by the state government, also includes provisions for awareness campaigns and broader transport safety initiatives.

As highways often lack consistent on-ground monitoring, the deployment of AI technology is expected to significantly improve safety standards, enabling real-time interventions and long-term behavioural change among commuters.

HC quashes ISRO land acquisition in Devanahalli

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In a significant decision, the Karnataka High Court has nullified the land acquisition process concerning properties in Abbachikkanahalli Village and Lalagondanahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District. The affected area comprised 81 acres and 39 guntas, which the state government had acquired for ISRO's space activities expansion.

The acquisition process began with a preliminary notification on January 28, 2010, followed by a final notification on May 30, 2011, and an award passed on July 19, 2013. The petitioners, including residents from Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Devanahalli taluk, contested the acquisition on grounds that the final notification exceeded the one-year statutory limit from the preliminary notification date, as per Section 6(2) of the Land Acquisition Act. They also highlighted the

absence of mandatory enquiry under Section 5A despite their objections.

Both the state government and ISRO defended their position through separate objection statements, asserting that all procedures, including preliminary notification, Section 5A enquiry, final notification, and award, complied with the relevant sections of the LA Act.

Upon examining the original acquisition records, the court discovered that the final notification under Section 6 of the LA Act had exceeded the one-year limitation period from the preliminary notification's publication. Justice SR Krishna Kumar observed that the final notification violated Section 5A provisions by failing to conduct the required enquiry or provide valid justification.

The court noted: "The state and ISRO categorically, unequivocally, and unambiguously stated in their statement of objections to the writ petitions that the award was passed on 19 July 2013. Secondly, the date 10 June 2013 was written by hand, as seen from the impugned award, which was said to have been approved on 19 July 2013. Thirdly, the original records submitted to the court indicated that there was neither any corroborative material nor cross-reference to the fact that the award was actually passed on 10 June 2013 and approved subsequently on 19 July 2013. Fourthly, the award notices were issued to the landowners more than one year thereafter, from 15 November 2014 onwards. Lastly, the respondents did not produce any corroborative, legal, or acceptable material to establish that the award was passed on 10 June 2011."

PSI found dead after four days

A 58-year-old police sub-inspector from Davangere, identified as Nagarajappa, was found dead by suicide in a lodge near MG Road in Tumakuru. The PSI had checked into Dwaraka Hotel on July 1 but had not stepped out of his room for four days, prompting suspicion among staff.

Hotel workers reported a foul smell emanating from the locked room and alerted the management, who then contacted the police. Upon breaking open the door, the PSI was found dead. A death note recovered from the scene reportedly cites family issues as the cause.

Nagarajappa was posted at the Badavane Police Station in Davangere. Tumkur city police have registered a case and are investigating further.

Couple absconds after ₹100 crore chit fund scam

A Kerala-based couple running a chit fund business in the city has been booked for allegedly cheating hundreds of investors of over ₹100 crore. The accused, Tomy AV and Shiny Tomy, owners of 'A&A Chit Fund and Finance' located on Ramamurthy Nagar Main Road, are currently absconding after shutting down their operations and switching off their phones.

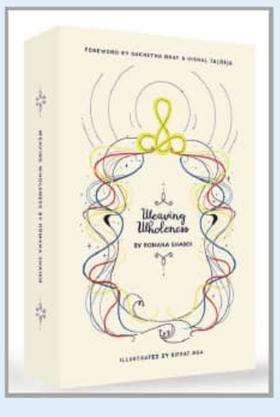
The Ramamurthy Nagar police registered an FIR against the couple on Saturday, following a complaint filed by a 64-year-old victim, who claimed he and his family alone lost ₹70 lakh. According to police, several others have also been defrauded, with the total amount running into several crores.

Operating since 2005, the couple reportedly promised unusually high returns (up to 25%) to lure people into investing. Over the years, they gained the trust of hundreds of customers, many of whom invested money set aside for crucial needs like education, healthcare, and weddings. The couple is also believed to have sold off their assets before going missing. A manhunt is underway to trace their whereabouts.

New lens on child education

'Weaving Wholeness,' Romana Shaikh's first book, integrates a nuanced understanding of the human body-mind, trauma, power relations and systemic oppression as it plays out in the lives of children growing up in poverty and marginalisation.

'Weaving Wholeness' is an invitation to recognise the role of education in creating a world of love and justice. It offers a way to connect, listen and see children in the context of the world they are growing up in - inside and outside - from a place of wholeness.



Speaking about the book, she said, "It's exploring how each of us, whoever we are in society, can really be a part of creating change to break systems of oppression, an invitation to create a world of love and justice. It has a lot of personal contemplation and reflection. It's like a companion. So if you're in a place where you're asking yourself, okay, what can I do -- The system is too big, this book is written to help you to say, okay, no, I am the system."

–BMB

BBMP's inaction on tree hazards sparks outcry

Civic body must take steps to clear dead trees at Hudson Circle which are at risk of falling on people or vehicles passing by, say environmentalists

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KAUSHIK JN

Dead trees at Hudson Circle which continue to pose danger to the unwary public

"Many commuters wait to board BMTC buses here.....I want the BBMP Forest Department to remove the dead trees to avoid accidents
– Dattatreya T Devare, Environmentalist

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Forest Department's inaction in clearing dead trees and dried branches across the city to prevent accidents have raised concerns amongst the public. Despite BBMP Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) assuring the removal of all trees that pose danger to the public, action remains lackluster.

Notably, there are two dead trees at Hudson Circle, a few hundred metres away from the BBMP Head Office, which continue to pose danger to the unwary public. Amongst the 10 trees present, two are dead and at a risk of injuring passersby or passengers waiting to board buses.

Adding to the problem, there exists a huge board put up nearly 25 years ago. The board, which contains details of penalties for violating traffic norms, along with the motto 'Your safety is our concern', leans on one of the dead trees. A few workers have tied the board with a tape to prevent it from falling. Yet, the board continues to be a potential threat with the imminent risk of falling.

It is not that BBMP did not initiate measures or campaigns to clear dead trees and dry branches. Though the BBMP has been spending a huge amount to engage contractors to remove dead trees, dry branches, and fallen trees during the monsoon, the purpose of spending tax-payers' money is not serving due to the lack of control on the contractors.

Environmentalists and the public have expressed concern over the apathy and negligence of the BBMP Forest Department in clearing of dead trees and dry branches.

Dattatreya T Devare, an environmentalist, said that the BBMP Forest Department needs to take measures to clear the dead trees at Hudson Circle. "Many commuters wait to board BMTC buses here. I have also waited at the spot to board a BMTC bus. I want the BBMP Forest Department to remove the dead trees to avoid accidents," said Devare.

Stating that the BBMP Forest Department must take immediate action, Vijay Nishanth, an environmentalist, highlighted that the dead trees may fall on someone or on a vehicle. "It is very important to keep a tab on such trees," he said.

Vinod Jacob of Namma Bengaluru Foundation said that the existence of the dead trees reflects on the focus of the BBMP Forest Department on trees in their own vicinity. "The poor maintenance of the city's assets is blatantly visible in Bengaluru," Jacob said. He opined that the focus is solely commercial and for concrete assets. "Even a simple board has not been changed for two decades but we see many skywalks being built for advertising purposes. We need a complete revamp and audit of BBMP for a better Brand Bengaluru," he added.

High Court quashes land acquisition for NICE project

In a significant ruling, the Karnataka High Court has quashed the acquisition of over 300 acres of land by the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) for the Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises (NICE) project, citing lack of final action even after 23 years. Justice R Devadas, who headed the single-judge bench, delivered the verdict while hearing a batch of writ petitions filed by over 50 landowners, including P Sridharamurthy, challenging the acquisition process. The court observed that despite initiating land acquisition for the project more than two decades ago, the state had failed to issue final orders or utilise the land for the intended purpose.

The judgment pointed out that the prolonged inaction had disrupted the livelihoods of farmers who depended on the land for agriculture. The court relied on precedents set by previous rulings of the High Court's division bench and the Supreme Court to annul the acquisition. The disputed land was part of a larger 6,800-acre acquisition proposed by KIADB to facilitate the construction of a 111-km long expressway between Bengaluru and Mysuru, including interchanges, toll plazas, peripheral and link roads. However, the court ruled that the failure to act within a reasonable timeframe rendered the acquisition invalid. **— BMB**

Bengaluru tops India in startup funding for H1 2025

Bengaluru has once again emerged as the country's leading startup hub, attracting the highest funding in India during the first half of 2025. According to the latest startup funding report, the city garnered $3.9 billion across 143 deals, accounting for 40% of the total capital raised nationally. In comparison, Delhi-NCR attracted $2.2 billion from 116 deals, while Mumbai secured $1.3 billion from 80 deals.

The Karnataka Department of IT and BT celebrated the milestone on social media, stating, "Namma Bengaluru leads again! Bengaluru tops India's startup funding chart for H1 2025. Karnataka continues to power the innovation economy of India." The report also highlighted that tier-1 cities dominated the funding landscape, with Bengaluru, Delhi-NCR, and Mumbai collectively accounting for 54% of the total inflow. Bengaluru has retained its position as the most preferred destination for startup investments in the country.

Overall, Indian startups raised $5.7 billion in the first half of 2025, marking an 8% growth compared to the same period last year. The surge was primarily driven by e-commerce and fintech sectors. The emergence of five new unicorns, despite global economic headwinds, reflects the resilience and maturity of the Indian startup ecosystem.

Globally too, Bengaluru made significant progress. In the Global Startup Ecosystem Report (GSER), the city jumped from 21st to 14th place, surpassing several global tech hubs. It now ranks alongside cities like Paris (12), Philadelphia (13), and Seattle (15), reaffirming its growing influence on the world innovation map. **— BMB**

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Pothole peril

Kempapura

A massive pothole at the Chiranjeevi Layout Circle on Kempapura Main Road, near Hebbal, has been left unattended for over three months, posing a serious risk to motorists and pedestrians alike. Residents urge immediate repair to prevent a potential tragedy.

Unsafe walkway

Horamavu

For over three weeks, pedestrians on Horamavu Main Road—near Sycon Apartments, opposite HDFC Bank—have struggled to walk due to unusable footpaths. The lack of walking space during peak hours is creating dangerous conditions, especially for schoolchildren and the elderly.

Risky road

Kaval Byrasandra

Exposed slabs on LR Bande Road in Kaval Byrasandra have become a death trap for two-wheeler riders. Several accidents have been reported as riders fail to spot these sudden obstructions in time. Locals demand urgent safety measures.

State reports zero Covid cases

In a significant development during the latest surge in Covid-19 infections, the state has reported zero new cases for the first time. According to the latest health bulletin, no patients are currently hospitalised due to the virus, although 75 individuals remain active cases under home isolation or monitoring.

Since January 1 of this year, the cumulative number of Covid-19 infections in the state has reached 2,543. Health authorities continue to monitor the situation closely and urge residents to remain vigilant despite the encouraging decline in daily case numbers. **–BMB**

Mining scam panel formed

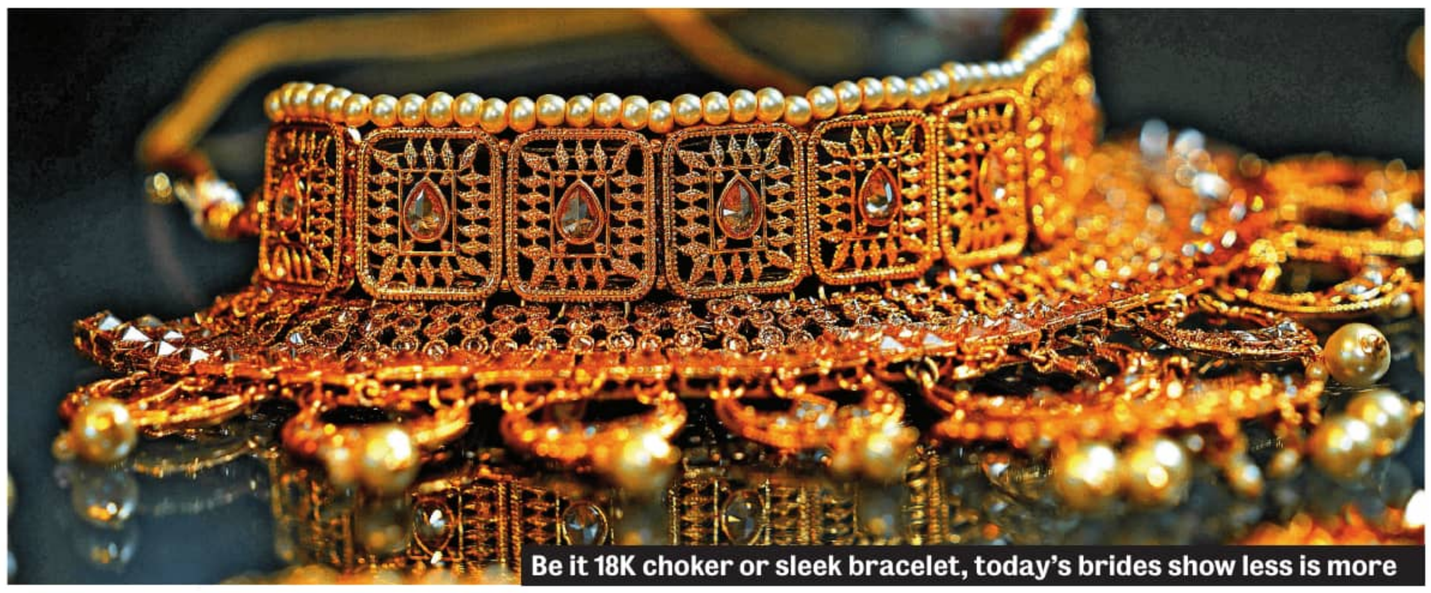
Ironically, the minister who had earlier written to the Chief Minister demanding recovery of illegal mining losses will now head a Cabinet subcommittee tasked with the very responsibility. The state government has issued an order constituting the subcommittee under the leadership of Law Minister HK Patil to study pending court cases related to illegal mining and recommend steps for the recovery of losses.

The subcommittee has been directed to examine all cases pending in fast-track courts and submit a comprehensive report within a month. The panel comprises Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara, Revenue Minister KH Muniyappa, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, and Minister SS Mallikarjun. The committee is expected to assess the extent of financial losses and recommend the appointment of a dedicated recovery commissioner, while also addressing the need for strengthening fast-track courts handling mining-related cases. The subcommittee was announced following a cabinet meeting held at Nandi Hills. The decision comes in the wake of concerns raised by HK Patil himself, who had earlier written to the CM highlighting systemic negligence in addressing illegal mining. Patil had pointed out that though the estimated loss from illegal mining was around ₹13 lakh crore, only 1.6% had been recovered so far. The committee has now been tasked with ensuring legal and administrative measures are taken to conclude these cases effectively and initiate strict recovery actions against the guilty.

–BMB

Weddings stay grand, gold goes light

B'luru brides favour wearable gold over wedding-only sets amid soaring prices, changing fashion preferences



Be it 18K choker or sleek bracelet, today's brides show less is more

As gold prices soar past ₹1 lakh for 10 grams, Bengaluru's bridal jewellery is undergoing a quiet revolution. Gone are the days when heavy 22K gold sets defined a bride's trousseau. Today's brides are picking pieces that are lighter on the neck and the wallet—but not on style or sentiment.

From family-run jewellery shops in Chickpet to plush showrooms in Jayanagar, retailers confirm the trend: sleek is chic. Modern brides are favouring 18K and even 14K gold sets that blend affordability with artistry. The shift is not about compromising tradition but balancing it with practicality.

Carats down, creativity up

"18K gold is 75% gold and 25% copper, which adds strength and durability," says Vimlesh Sipani, a Bengaluru-based jeweller. "It's perfect for intricate, contemporary designs that today's brides love." Compared to 22K gold, which costs around ₹9,300 per gram, 18K comes in at a more manageable ₹7,800. This affordability allows brides to experiment with diamond-studded pieces, kundan work, and modular designs that can be worn beyond the wedding day.

"Sales haven't dropped, but weights have. Earlier, bridal sets weighed 300 grams or more. Now, 90-100 gram set is norm, often with one standout piece instead of three –Store owner

Culture remains, composition changes

Jewellery Traders' Federation General Secretary, Dr B Ramachari, puts it in perspective: "Gold is not just a luxury, it's economic insurance. Whether the Carat is 22 or 18, its value in Indian households remains deep-rooted and emotional." He points out that India imports nearly all of its gold, with Karnataka's Hatti Gold Mines contributing a minuscule 0.001%. Yet, gold's importance in rituals, weddings, and financial planning remains unchanged.

From wedding-only to wear-everywhere

Software engineer and bride-to-be Priyanka Kumar chose an 18 carat kundan choker over a bulky 22 carat set. "We didn't want to spend ₹10–12 lakhs just for one event," she says. "This piece is elegant and something I can wear again for parties." This sentiment is echoed across Bengaluru, where many working women prefer jewellery that is stylish, versatile, and not locked away post-wedding.

Lighter loads, bolder looks

Jewellers are quickly adapting. "Sales haven't dropped, but weights have," says a store owner in South Bengaluru. "Earlier, bridal sets weighed 300 grams or more. Now, a 90–100 gram set is the norm, often with one standout piece instead of three." The market, too, is far from slowing down. According to Dr Ramachari, 30–50 jewellery stores open daily across India. Social media, influencer campaigns, and custom designs are fueling this shift to smart, repeatable jewellery choices.

Shining through change

Despite rising prices, Bengaluru's love affair with gold hasn't dulled—it's just transformed. As Dr Ramachari aptly concludes, "Gold is part of our life. The size may change, but the shine remains." Whether it's an 18 carat choker or a lightweight diamond-studded bracelet, today's brides are proving that less is not just more—it's modern, meaningful, and unmistakably golden.

–Achala Nataraj

Karnataka's longest bridge ready

Karnataka's longest and the country's second longest cable-stayed bridge-Sigandur Bridge, built across the Linganamakki reservoir between Kalasavalli and Ambaragodu in Sagar taluk, will be inaugurated on July 14. Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will preside over the ceremony and formally open the 2.44-km-long bridge. The bridge has been constructed at a cost of ₹473 crore as part of the National Highway 309E (Byndoor–Ranebennur route), under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. After Gujarat's Okha Bridge, the Sigandur structure is now India's second-longest bridge, bringing significant pride to the region. The project is expected to greatly enhance connectivity and promote tourism.

Shivamogga MP BY Raghavendra also said a formal request will be submitted to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to name the bridge after Sigandhur Chowdeshwari, a revered local deity. "Sigandhur is a well-known pilgrimage centre, and people from the region have long expressed the desire to see the bridge named after the goddess. The party will officially appeal to the CM in this regard," he said. He added that final-stage works are progressing steadily despite persistent rains, with workers continuing construction without interruption to ensure the bridge is ready for the upcoming inauguration.

CM not OBC board chief

Reports circulating in the media claiming that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has been appointed as the Chairman of the OBC Advisory Board of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) are incorrect, party sources clarified on Saturday. A communique from CM Siddaramaiah's office clarified, "There has been no such appointment. In reality, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is one of the several members of the OBC Advisory Board."

The next meeting of the AICC OBC Advisory Board is scheduled to be held in Bengaluru on July 15. It will be chaired by Dr Anil Jaihind, the President of the AICC's OBC Department. The meeting will take place at the Bharat Jodo Bhavan, the KPCC headquarters in city, with CM Siddaramaiah playing host. Over 50 leaders, including former chief ministers of various states, sitting and former MPs and MLAs, are expected to attend the meeting.

Explosives expert behind 2013 Malleswaram blast

Abu Bakr Siddiqui, recently arrested in Andhra Pradesh in connection with the 2013 blast outside the BJP office in Malleswaram, Bengaluru, has been revealed as a highly trained explosives expert and radical Islamist influenced by Zakir Naik and the terror group ISIS. Investigators said Siddiqui specialised in making Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) using electronic timers and components, and often operated alone while indoctrinating like-minded individuals with extremist ideology.

According to police, Siddiqui had been on the run for over 30 years and functioned as a lone wolf terrorist. He had travelled extensively across India and occasionally to foreign countries, spreading his ideology and sharing bomb-making expertise. His involvement has now been confirmed in multiple terror plots across the country, including the 2013 Malleswaram explosion that injured 16 people and was officially classified as a terror act by the Union Home Ministry. Siddiqui's arrest was made on July 1 by Tamil Nadu police in Andhra Pradesh. Officials disclosed that he had previously plotted a pipe bomb assassination attempt on BJP leader LK Advani in Madurai in 2011. He was also known for fabricating advanced explosive devices and lethal materials. Investigators described him as a dangerous extremist who had mastered the technical assembly of electronic timers.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

"My prayer won't fail"

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, known for his sharp political moves and spiritual pit stops, stirred curiosity again on Friday last. "Efforts may fail, but prayers won't," he quipped at Chamundi Hills, dodging a direct answer on whether he's still in the CM race. "Kharge has given me a message. I've asked Chamundeshwari for what I truly want," he added, cryptically brushing aside further questions with, "Now's not the time to talk." Post-darshan, DKS smashed 11 coconuts at the temple steps, a symbolic prayer-offering. "Let's not get into any discussion now. Mallikarjun Kharge is our leader; he's guided us well. We'll all work together," he said before heading out. As for what message Kharge gave him? Shivakumar left to the gods — and the grapevine.

CM's mic drop

At the Press Day 2025 celebration in Bengaluru, CM Siddaramaiah didn't mince words. "If we need to fight for real news, doesn't that mean fake news is flooding us?" he quipped, throwing a pointed jab at rising misinformation. Calling out "imaginative journalism" as a threat to both media credibility and social harmony, the CM stressed he's all for fearless, independent journalism — "Even when lies are spread about me, I don't pick up the phone to complain!" he shrugged. From crows on car bonnets being turned into superstitious sagas, to channels chasing drama over data, Siddaramaiah urged the press to side with truth, democracy, and the people, not politicians like him. He launched free bus passes and health schemes for rural journalists but was quick to clarify, "This isn't a bribe for good press. Write the truth, always."

Clarification

Caught in a controversy over calling Siddaramaiah a "lottery CM", Congress MLA BR Patil has now hit back, claiming his video was distorted. Speaking to journalists, he clarified, "Yes, I did say Siddaramaiah was a lucky lottery winner — but what's being spread beyond that is untrue." Refuting claims that he orchestrated Siddaramaiah's meeting with Sonia Gandhi, Patil said, "I was with him in Delhi and only insisted he meet her. He's a mass leader, I can't script that journey." Calling out the spin, Patil added, "Some people are deliberately twisting things to sow mistrust and damage my bond with Siddaramaiah. I won't let mischief-makers succeed."

Heartwarming gesture

In a rare and heartwarming act of compassion, a judge at the Ramanagara court stepped outside his courtroom to conduct a hearing for a woman who was unable to climb the steps due to a leg injury. H Yashodamma, who had come for a compensation hearing related to her father's fatal accident, sat outside the notary's office as she couldn't access the courtroom. Learning of her difficulty, Principal Civil Judge and First Class Magistrate Avinash personally came to her, conducted the hearing at her location, verified documents, and ordered the release of Rs.10 lakh compensation to her family. The funds, meant for the deceased's 10 children, had been deposited earlier in the Ramanagara court. The judge's thoughtful action stood as a moving example of justice delivered with dignity and empathy.

Soothsaying

It's official—opposition leader R Ashoka may have traded his MLA badge for a crystal ball, and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar isn't missing a beat. After Ashok boldly predicted a leadership change in Karnataka by October, DKS couldn't resist a cheeky jab: "I didn't know Ashok had become a certified astrologer! If he's got the stars sorted, please give me an appointment—I'll go ask about my future too!" Ashok, not to be outdone, shot back, saying he'd already read DKS's "political horoscope" in the corridors of Vidhana Soudha, and apparently, the stars aren't aligned. "He has no natural yogas for power. No Jupiter, no Venus, no Saturn—he'll have to snatch authority the hard way!"

Attire ready

When asked about HD Kumaraswamy's big claim that the JD(S)-BJP alliance will soon form the government, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar didn't miss a beat. With a smirk and a sparkle in his eye, he shot back: "Oh really? Then I'll start prepping the wardrobe! Dhoti, shirt, pants, jubba, even a wax coat – I'll arrange it all for the swearing-in!" he quipped. "In fact, I'll hand over the outfit to you journos – make sure HDK gets it on time!"

— Sridhar Vivan

Will Yellow Line be Independence Day gift?

Commercial operations of Yellow Line Metro between RV Road and Bommasandra Likely from August 15

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The long-awaited Yellow Line Metro connecting RV Road to Bommasandra via Electronic City may finally open for commercial operations on August 15. This metro line, linking the city to the Hosur direction, has been ready for nearly a year, but a shortage of train coaches delayed its launch. The 18.8 km stretch is now certified for operations after Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) received a safety clearance certificate on June 27. The final inspection by the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety (CMRS) from the Railway Department is scheduled for July 15 and 16.

The route requires at least three six-coach trains for minimal operations. While civil works, including track laying and station construction, were completed last year, the unavailability of coaches postponed the start. However, BMRCL has now received the necessary coaches and is preparing to roll out services for the public.

The first prototype train, equipped with a driverless engine, arrived in April 2024. It underwent extensive testing for three months, but subsequent delays in supply stalled further progress. The second and third trains arrived in January and May 2025, respectively. A trial run was conducted in September last year by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), with participation from experts in rolling stock, tracks, braking systems, and other technical teams.

The 18.8 km stretch has been certified for operations following BMRCL's receipt of the safety clearance on June 27

List of stations on Yellow Line

The Yellow Line includes the following stations: Bommasandra, Hebbagodi, Hosa Road, Infosys Foundation-Konappana Agrahara, Electronic City, Bettadasanapura (Beretena Agrahara), Hosa Road (again), Singasandra, Kudlu Gate, Hongasandra, Bommanahalli, Central Silk Board, BTM Layout, Jayadeva Hospital, Ragigudda, and RV Road. According to BMRCL Managing Director Maheshwar Rao, CMRS approval is underway for full-scale operations along the RV Road–Bommasandra corridor. Initial operations are planned with limited trains at 30-minute intervals, with a target launch on August 15.

Limited trains, partial service initially

Full-scale operations on the Yellow Line would require 14 trains to ensure service every 15 minutes. Currently, only three trains with six coaches each are available. Thus, BMRCL plans to begin operations at half-hour intervals. A final decision is yet to be taken on whether trains will halt at all stations or at only five key stops. Even with just three trains, the system is capable of carrying 50,000 passengers daily. Once fully operational, the line can serve up to 3.5 lakh commuters per day.

Political allegations over delay

Meanwhile, a protest was held at Lalbagh Circle, led by BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, accusing the state government of delaying the launch. Demonstrators, including Congress opponents and local leaders, gathered in front of the BMRCL corporate office alleging that the delay in starting metro services was due to lack of cooperation from the state government.

Without Tabebuias or Jacarandas, is it still Bengaluru?

M SOUBADRA DEVY

BY INVITATION

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Between February and May, Bengaluru gently transitions into summer. Yellow Tabebuias bloom first, followed by the lilac haze of Jacarandas. Their petals drift down, forming vivid carpets along the city's roads. For many, this flowering season offers a rare pause to look up, breathe in, and slow down in an otherwise fast-paced city.

Childhood memory of Garden City

As a child seeking escape from Pondicherry's heat, these flowering trees left a deep imprint on my mind. The tree-lined avenues, soothing canopies, and bursts of colour helped shape my early memories of Bengaluru—the city once lovingly called the Garden City.

Imported beauty, deeply rooted

These trees didn't appear by accident. In the early 1900s, Gustav Krumbiegel, then superintendent of Lalbagh, and other city planners introduced species like the Tabebuia and Jacaranda for their resilience and visual appeal. Although these trees are native to Central and South America and Africa, they've since become intertwined with Bengaluru's identity. Ecologists refer to them as cultural keystone species—non-native organisms that hold deep emotional, seasonal, and aesthetic significance in a place.

Regional flora in everyday life

Across South India, similar examples flourish. In Hyderabad, the native silk cotton tree (Bombax ceiba) blooms bright red in late winter, drawing flocks of rosy starlings who feed on its nectar, turning the bare canopy into a spectacle. In the Nilgiris, Eucalyptus trees from Australia line winding roads, offering their signature scent. For decades, eucalyptus oil—distilled from these leaves—has been a household remedy in South Indian homes, tucked away in bottles labelled Nilgiri thaila.

When "foreign" becomes familiar

Despite not being native, these trees are deeply embedded in regional memory, health practices, and everyday aesthetics. Around the world, similar examples exist, from Japan's cherry blossoms (sakura) to the rhododendrons of Sikkim and Darjeeling, trees that have become part of a place's cultural fabric over time.

Risk of exclusion

As Indian cities pursue climate action, a shift is underway. Microforests and pocket gardens are being planted for carbon capture and ecological restoration. But this movement has also sparked a rigid native-only approach. While native species do support biodiversity, this mindset can lead to a kind of ecological xenophobia, where anything foreign is deemed invasive, regardless of its integration or benefit.

Ecology is complex, not binary

Critics argue that non-native species fail to support local pollinators, but emerging evidence suggests a more complex truth. Over time, many introduced species adapt to local ecologies. Consider the seemebadanekayi—chayote squash, literally "foreign brinjal" in Kannada. Once unfamiliar, it is now a kitchen staple in Bengaluru homes. Ecologist Ronita Mukherjee's study shows that the plant is pollinated by at least four native bee species, proving that ecological acceptance is possible, and even common.

Urban nature needs human help

While native trees can attract native pollinators and fruit-eating birds like koels and barbets, cities pose unique challenges. Seed dispersers often can't ensure seeds land in fertile ground amid concrete and fragmentation. Human intervention—careful planting and nurturing—is essential to help nature take root in urban ecosystems.

Case for balance

Cities are not untouched wildernesses awaiting restoration. They are novel ecosystems, hybrids shaped by infrastructure, migration, colonial history, and human choice. In these spaces, cultural keystone species do more than survive; they define the city's seasons, evoke emotions, and support life in unexpected ways.

Beyond origins: True role of trees

As we green our cities in an era of climate urgency, we must move beyond simplistic binaries of native vs non-native. Trees should be valued not just by their origins, but by their roles—ecological, emotional, and cultural. Many introduced trees support pollinators, livelihoods, seasonal rhythms, and city identities.

Thoughtful way forward

The challenge is not to choose one over the other, but to foster a thoughtful mix—rooted in place, resilient in ecology, and rich in cultural memory. Cities are not just spaces to plant trees; they are places of meaning, memory, and shared life. In our quest to make them greener, we must also make them wiser.

(The writer is a senior fellow at ATREE)

BM SIMPLY PUT

Today we look at what new Registration Bill 2025 means for property buyers and builders

MODERN ACT

What is it?
The Registration Bill 2025 is a proposed legislation by the Central Government to replace the 117-year-old Registration Act of 1908. It aims to modernise how land and property transactions are recorded in India, moving to a fully digital registration process.

When is this happening?
The draft bill has been released for public comments and suggestions. Once finalized and passed, it will automatically repeal the old act, bringing the new digital-first system into effect.

Why was new law needed?
The current law governing property registration in India is a colonial-era legislation that has become outdated and inefficient in today's digital age. Its manual, paper-based processes are not only slow and cumbersome but also lack transparency, making them highly susceptible to corruption and manipulation. Moreover, implementing any reform under the old law has been a major challenge, as even minor changes required the approval of Parliament, leading to delays and bureaucratic hurdles. Recognising these issues, several states have long been advocating for a simplified and modern legal framework that aligns with contemporary governance needs and technological advancements.

How will the system work?
1. Digital-only property registrations
Under the new framework, all property-related transactions—ranging from sale agreements to mortgage deeds—must be conducted entirely online. This marks a major departure from the traditional system, eliminating the need for physical paperwork. Transactions will rely on digital signatures and Aadhaar-based authentication, ensuring both speed and security. The aim is to streamline processes and drastically reduce the chances of fraud and forgery, while making property dealings more accessible and transparent.

2. Centralised digital platform
A unified, centralised digital platform will serve as a one-stop solution for verifying property ownership, managing land records, and submitting all necessary documents. This platform will allow users to track the status of their transactions in real time, thereby increasing accountability and efficiency. The system is also designed to ensure data accuracy, helping prevent disputes related to outdated or incorrect records. For users, this means better control over the process and easier access to essential information anytime, anywhere.

3. Mandatory e-Registration of documents
To maintain consistency and legal clarity, the bill mandates electronic registration for all types of property-related documents. This includes sale certificates, court orders, and powers of attorney. The move not only simplifies document handling but also builds a verified digital archive that authorities and individuals can rely on for future reference. By bringing these critical documents under a digital umbrella, the system aims to close loopholes that have historically been exploited.

4. New roles and cadre
To support the digital infrastructure and ensure smooth implementation, the bill also proposes the creation of new roles within the registration system, specifically Additional and Assistant Registration Inspectors. These officials will be trained to manage the upgraded digital processes and assist citizens in navigating the new system. Their presence is intended to reinforce efficiency, resolve issues promptly, and provide a human interface for those who may need extra support in transitioning to the digital mode.

How will this impact you?
1. For Builders and Developers
The new system promises quicker and more seamless approvals from regulatory authorities, reducing the time taken to get projects off the ground. Developers will benefit from a transparent and streamlined process to track and maintain project-related documents, which is especially crucial for large-scale ventures. By minimizing bureaucratic delays, the reform is expected to significantly cut down on project execution timelines, ultimately leading to faster deliveries and improved business efficiency.

2. For Homebuyers
For the average homebuyer, the reform translates into a stress-free experience, eliminating the need to wait in long queues at sub-registrar offices. Aadhaar-based verification adds an additional layer of security, reducing the risk of fraud and impersonation. From uploading documents to completing registration, every step will be digital, allowing homebuyers to manage the entire process from the comfort of their home. This not only saves time and effort but also builds trust in the property transaction system.

3. Who loses out?
Middlemen and touts operating around sub-registrar offices stand to lose their grip. A transparent and direct online system minimizes the scope for bribes or under-the-table dealings.

State of play: Karnataka shows the way
Karnataka has already implemented several of the technological measures proposed in the new bill, including online registration since 2016 and the 'Anywhere Registration' model that allows citizens to register property at any sub-registrar office. The state is now working towards integrating Aadhaar-based digital signatures to further streamline the process. As K.A. Dayananda, Inspector General of Registration, notes, "We've already covered most of what's proposed. Digital signature integration is the next big step."

What will change?
The proposed reforms aim to bring citizen-centric governance to real estate transactions by prioritizing ease of access, efficiency, and fairness. With faster dispute resolution mechanisms embedded in the digital system, property-related conflicts can be addressed more swiftly, reducing long-standing litigation burdens. The shift to online processes ensures greater transparency and accountability, minimising the scope for manipulation and corruption. Most importantly, the digital registration framework provides stronger legal standing for all registered properties, offering citizens greater protection and confidence in their ownership rights.

Kaikondrahalli Lake is free of waste; 12 sacks lugged out

As part of the Plastic Free July campaign, The Indian Ploggers Army along with employees of Amadeus carried out a lake cleanup drive. In a span of 90 minutes, 50 volunteers collected 12 sacks of waste, including plastic, food wrappers, slippers, and mixed garbage. The activity was supported by lake marshals and BBMP staff. Plog Raja, who leads the Indian Ploggers Army, said the objective was to create awareness about the impact of plastic on the environment and animals. He said the drive was part of an effort to promote individual responsibility and encourage mindful disposal of waste.

The group selected a lake for the cleanup as part of its ongoing effort to protect existing water bodies. Raja said lakes in Bengaluru are declining in number, and the group wants to protect those that remain by involving local communities. He said that the Indian Ploggers Army conducts cleanup drives every weekend from 7 am to 9 am.

The team identified mixed waste, food waste, and garbage dumps at black spots as major challenges. Such waste is difficult to segregate and usually ends up in landfills. The group urged people to carry reusable cutlery and bags, avoid

Volunteers gathered at lake premises to begin clean-up efforts

single-use disposables, and refrain from littering. They also requested citizens to reuse items like clothes, slippers, and shoes instead of discarding them.

BBMP staff supported the drive by collecting the waste after the activity. The group also works with schools, colleges, and corporate employees to expand awareness. The team plans to continue the 'Bring Your Own Bag' campaign across all upcoming drives.

Tens of kids ferried in autos meant for 4 occupants

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

social media by posting a picture of private school children travelling in an auto where the smaller children were holding each other and a child standing at the side was hanging on to the auto's rod and another child's is seen almost outside the auto. "Many just hand over their kids to auto drivers without checking the vehicle's condition or capacity. It's shocking."

The Bangalore Traffic Police have been conducting checks outside schools and on main roads during morning and evening school hours. Offenders are being fined and warned, with repeat violations attracting higher penalties and vehicle seizure. Still, the numbers point to a worrying lack of compliance.

"We see a lot of overloaded autos ferrying children to school. This is really dangerous for the children's safety and this can cause accidents resulting in loss of life or limb. The autos should be designed to take the children safely with proper seating, protection, doors and grills for children to be safe and not fall out," said Vinod Jacob of Namma Bengaluru Foundation.

Vinod said enforcement alone may not be enough. "There needs to be a collective effort involving schools, parents, and local authorities. Schools should verify and register transport operators and ensure adherence to safety norms. Parents must stop encouraging or tolerating unsafe travel," he said.

Some parents too spoke about this issue to BM. "We shifted our daughter from an auto to a school bus due to safety concerns. The overcrowding on roads, coupled with children crammed into autos and sometimes even hanging out, is alarming. There needs to be a strict limit on the number of children autos are allowed to carry during school trips," said Rachna Aravind, parent of a school-going child.

Labeling drivers as "greedy" may ignore the economic pressures they face, but endangering children by overloading vehicles is undeniably irresponsible. Similarly, calling parents "poor" or "irresponsible" simplifies a complex issue as many parents genuinely struggle to find affordable and safe transport options, experts said.

The shortage of safe and affordable school transport options, especially in densely populated localities, is a real issue these parents face. As schools reopen after summer vacations and traffic volumes rise, the focus on road safety has never been more urgent. With nearly 8,000 cases already this year, the question remains: Will parents, schools, and drivers finally take notice in time?

Could have thrown better: Neeraj after win

Neeraj Chopra (R) is congratulated by supporters after winning the Neeraj Chopra Classic 2025, India's first ever international javelin tournament, at the Sri Kanteerava Outdoor Stadium, in Bengaluru, on Sunday

India's javelin spearhead, Neeraj Chopra, has set his eyes on the World Athletics Championships after striking gold at the inaugural NC Classic 2025 here on Saturday, a competition named after him.

The Sri Kanteerava Outdoor Stadium, filled with thousands of fans, clapping in harmony when Neeraj took the javelin, sprinted down the track and aimed for glory. On a windy yet cool evening in Bengaluru, the 27-year-old heaved his javelin to a solid distance of 86.18m to walk away with the top honours before the night ended.

With another accolade in his cabinet, Neeraj will shift his focus to the World Athletics Championships scheduled to be held from September 13 to 21 in Tokyo, where he will strive hard to defend his title. In 2023, Neeraj produced one of the best performances of his career with a throw of 88.17m and took the gold medal home.

Before the competition, Neeraj aims to refine his technique by working with his coach, Jan Zelezny, to bolster his chances of retaining the crown.

"It is the biggest competition of this year, and we won gold last time in the World Championship. We will work hard to defend that title, and we have to work hard for that. I will work with my coach to improve my technique," Neeraj told ANI.

In the Neeraj Chopra (NC) Classic 2025, there were plenty of 80m-plus throws as the javelin went left and right. Neeraj, too excited before his first throw, fouled the attempt and had to be calmed by his coach. In the end, even though it wasn't his best effort of 90.23m in Doha, Neeraj was pleased with his performance despite being conscious of the possibility of doing better.

"It was good. There was pressure. A lot of people turned up. I am happy with my performance. I could have thrown a better throw, but today, we did not have the conditions. Still, it feels very good that the competition was very good," he added.

In front of an ebullient crowd, while Neeraj reigned supreme, Kenya's Julius Yego notched up his season best and settled for second with 84.51m. Sri Lanka's Rumesh Pathirage claimed the third position with a best throw of 84.34m. —ANI

Water table continues to drop in 3 taluks

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Groundwater experts also attribute this gain to various initiatives, both by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and city-based non-governmental organisations, to dig recharge wells.

Notably, BBMP has so far dug nearly 4,500 recharge wells across more than 300 parks in the city.

Drop here

However, Nelamangala, Yelahanka, and Bengaluru East continue to record a drop in the water table.

In Nelamangala, the water table in May dropped by more than 10 metre below ground level compared with last year's data. While in Yelahanka, it has dropped in the range of 0 to 2 metre bgl, in Bengaluru East, it has gone down by 4 metre bgl.

According to Shubha Ramachandran, water team lead at Biome Environmental Trust, high groundwater extraction due to development activities and limited Cauvery water supply are other reasons.

"Expanding residential and commercial areas on the outskirts are experiencing a decline in groundwater levels due to increased extraction. Nelamangala, Yelahanka, and Bengaluru East are parts of the city that are continuing to grow, and thus, water requirements are higher in these places. When clubbed with a limited supply of Cauvery water, dependence on groundwater is expected to go up," said Ramachandran.

Experts say strengthening the Cauvery water supply and enhancing groundwater recharge through more recharge wells across the city are ways forward. However, a coordinated effort, including planning and funding, is essential to monitor and improve groundwater recharge across Bangalore. This will balance the increasing water demand in expanding areas with sustainable water management practices.

"The Karnataka Groundwater Authority (KGW) is the appropriate body to oversee these initiatives, potentially involving citizen participation to ensure effective implementation. The increase in concretised surface due to rapid growth, clubbed with a higher rate of extraction, are the prime reasons behind continuously dropping groundwater levels in some taluks," said an expert.

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I, Arokia Thanga Rakini Victor W/O, Mohanraj Kumar R/o No 7, 6th Cross Road, Madhikere Nayakara Road Yeranapalya Ramamurthy Nagar Bangalore 560016. have changed my name to Rakini Kumaran for all purposes.

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I Ram Sajeevan S/O, Duli Chand Anuragi R/o E06, Chitrakut Century Apartments, 60 Feet Road, Sahakar Nagar, Bengaluru have changed my name to Ram Sajeewan Anuragi.

I, Gopal R/o No.42, 2nd Cross, Bhuvaneshwari Nagar, RT Nagar Bengaluru 560032 have changed my name to Gopalappa Narayanappa. I shall called by this name for all purpose

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I, SIDDHI SATISH residing at No 54, Veda Mandir, Police Station Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru-560004, have changed my name to SIDDHI JHADE for all purposes.

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GALLERIA

ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಹಾಗೂ ತಾಲೂಕು ಮಟ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿ
ಕಂಪ್ಯೂಟರ್ ತರಬೇತಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳಿಗೆ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಆಹ್ವಾನ
ಸರಕಾರದ ಅಂಗೀಕೃತ ಕಂಪ್ಯೂಟರ್, ವಿವಿಧ ಕೋರ್ಸುಗಳನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಲು ಸುವರ್ಣಾವಕಾಶ
ಶಾಲೆ ಕಾಲೇಜುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಖಾತರಿ ಉದ್ಯೋಗ ಕಲ್ಪಿಸುವ 1 ವರುಷದ
ನರ್ಸರಿ ಟೀಚರ್ಸ್ ಟ್ರೈನಿಂಗ್ ಕೋರ್ಸ್
ಪ್ರೈಮರಿ ಟೀಚರ್ಸ್ ಟ್ರೈನಿಂಗ್ (PTT)
Diploma in Computer Teachers Training Course
DIPLOMA IN COMPUTER DATA ENTRY OPERATOR
6 ತಿಂಗಳ DIT, DCA, DOA ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಕೋರ್ಸುಗಳು, (Qual:SSLC/PUC)
ಸರಕಾರದ PM ವಿಶ್ವಕರ್ಮ ಹಾಗೂ ವಿವಿಧ ಕೌಶಲ್ಯ ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಪಾಲುದಾರಿಕಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ
ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಕಂಪ್ಯೂಟರ್ ಸಾಕ್ಷರತಾ ಸಮಿತಿ
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 # Change of parenting style
Hollywood actress Brooke Shields said that she has become "more lenient" with her daughters

DOUBLE ROLE

Bollywood divas who are now leading business ventures

Many Bollywood actresses are now straddling two different spheres with ease. Along with a busy acting career, they have also turned entrepreneurs. Here we look at a few of the names. —**ETimes**

Beauty with brains

Deepika Padukone isn't just a screen icon – she's a smart investor. From launching her skincare brand 82°E to investing in health startups, she's building a legacy of conscious wellness rooted in science and elegance.

Fragrance and focus

Priyanka Chopra Jonas expanded into beauty with Anomaly, a haircare brand that's clean, sustainable, and affordable. Her global sensibilities and celebrity influence have helped Anomaly become one of the fastest-growing brands in its segment.

Capitalising on style

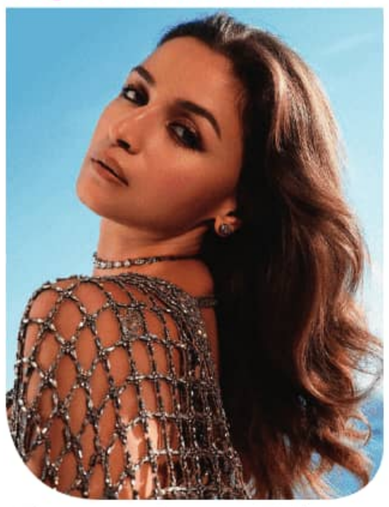
Sonam Kapoor, long hailed as a fashion trailblazer, co-founded a luxury clothing brand, Rheson, with her sister. The label echoes her signature aesthetics – minimal yet bold, Indian yet international, entirely made in India.

Fashioned for growth

Anushka Sharma brought her charm into fashion with Nush – a clothing label that caters to young, stylish women. Combining comfort and flair, her brand reflects her off-screen persona and commercial vision.

Startup superstar move

Alia Bhatt entered the business arena with Ed-a-Mamma, an eco-conscious kidswear brand. What began as a passion project is now a multi-crore venture championing sustainability and thoughtful storytelling for children through fashion.

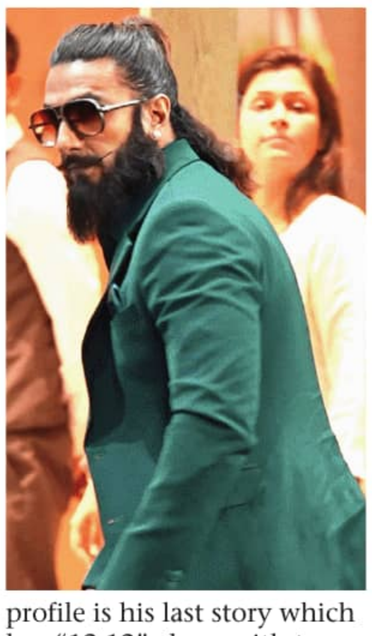


What's up with Ranveer's Insta?

Ranveer Singh is a man you can expect the unexpected from. Known for his charismatic personality, Ranveer is often seen leaving his fans stunned with his every move. And did something similar just happen right ahead of his 40th birthday?

Ranveer has deleted all his Instagram posts ahead of his birthday. Just a day before his 40th birthday, the star deleted all his posts from Instagram, leaving netizens perplexed.

Ranveer enjoys a global fanbase of over 47 million followers on the said social media platform alone. His every post makes headlines and goes viral in no time. Thus, his act of wiping it all clean has left everyone wondering what's cooking.



The only thing visible on Ranveer Singh's Insta profile is his last story which has "12:12" along with two sword emojis. Though much information or explanation behind the story hasn't been provided, fans are speculating it is regarding the teaser release of 'Dhurandar.'

—**ETimes**

'She woke up and was like, 'Damn, Jack!...': Titanic take

Actor Regina Hall recently weighed in regarding Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio's characters in the 1997 blockbuster Titanic's climax.

According to People, the Girls Trip actor, while promoting her partnership with Bounty, shared her thoughts on the long-standing argument about whether Jack could have survived if Rose had made more effort to share the floating plank in the 1997 film 'Titanic.'

The 54-year-old actress joked, "She got up there and got comfortable enough to conk out. She woke up and was like, 'Damn, Jack!' It wasn't enough. She was sleeping so hard, her voice couldn't wake her up. Jack was gone!"

Fans have debated for years whether the wooden plank, which wasn't a door but a piece of balsa wood from the ship's structure, could have supported both Jack and Rose. In Hall's opinion, Rose could have done more.

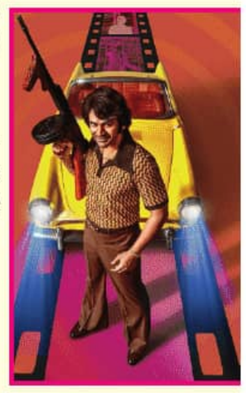
"I was like, 'Rose, you were still in the middle of chaos!'... I feel like if she was going to be on the door, at the very least, she should have stayed awake! She could have even lied on top of Jack and let him be on the door!" Hall said.

The moment, shown at the end of Titanic, has remained one of the most talked-about movie scenes. According to People, the prop itself was sold for nearly \$1 million in 2024. —**ANI**

SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

First look unveiled



Multi-starrer movie 666 Operation Dream Theatre has generated curiosity among the movie-goers since Hemanth M Rao announced last month that he would be directing this film.

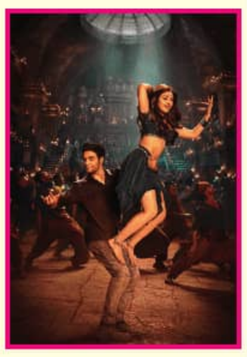
Recently, the makers unveiled two posters showcasing Dhananjay in a new avatar.

The first look offers a close-up in a retro-toned frame and Dhananjay in a never-seen-before look.

In the second look, Dhananjaya is armed with a gun, exuding an aura of playful anger and swag.

About the look Dhananjaya said, 'When an actor finds a director with a larger vision and the passion for the cinema, they get involved in the process of acting and immerse themselves in it. I'm glad to have been working with one such team led by Hemanth M Rao, my producer Vaishak J Gowda, a passionate guy who breathes cinema, Charan Raj, and Advaitha Gurumurthy. All their lives revolve only around cinema."

Song out



The second song of the much awaited multilingual movie Junior was unveiled recently. Playback singers Haripriya and Deepak Blue sung this song – Viral Vayyaari – under the guidance of music director Devi Sri Prasad. This lyric was written by Pavan Bhat and the movie is directed by Radhakrishna Reddy who is known for the film Maya Bazaar. It was bankrolled by Ashwini Puneeth Rajkumar under the PRK Productions banner five years ago.

"Junior is my second movie for me as a director. The song Viral Vayyaari features Kireeti Reddy and Srileela. We put up a set in Bengaluru for this song. It took us 10 days to complete the shooting of the song. I am very happy with the performance of Kireeti Reddy. Kireeti Reddy will be a role model for newcomers who want to become somebody in Sandalwood by working hard. He has acted like an experienced actor in the movie," said director Reddy.

He said the song Viral Vayyaari has received good response. "The teaser too received good response. This movie has all elements to entertain all types of audiences," he said. The movie is expected to be released in Kannada, Tamil, and Telugu. It features Kireeti Reddy, Sreeleela, Genelia Deshmukh and others.

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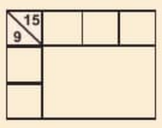
facebook.com/theBangaloremirror
@BangaloreMirror

SOLVE IT IN A MINUTE

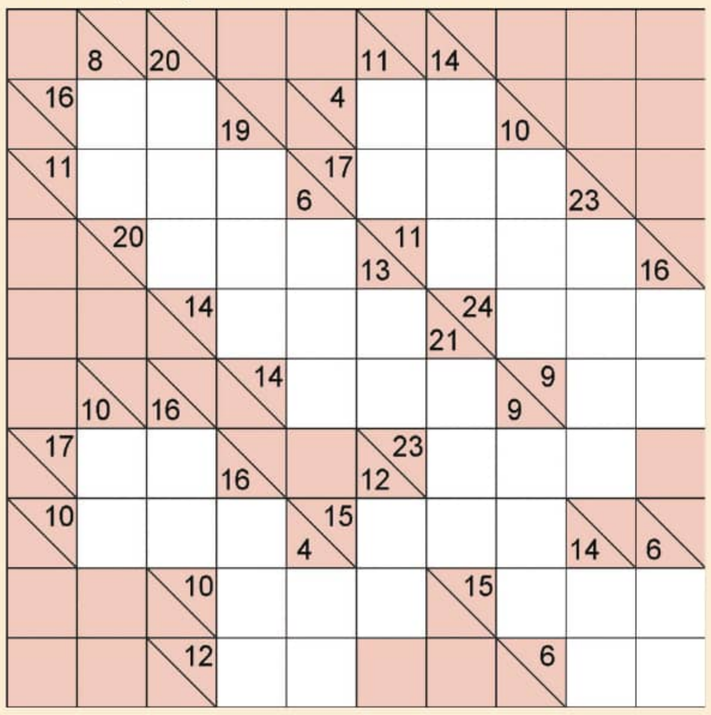
Find the largest number of 3 digits divisible by 4 and 7.

Kakuro

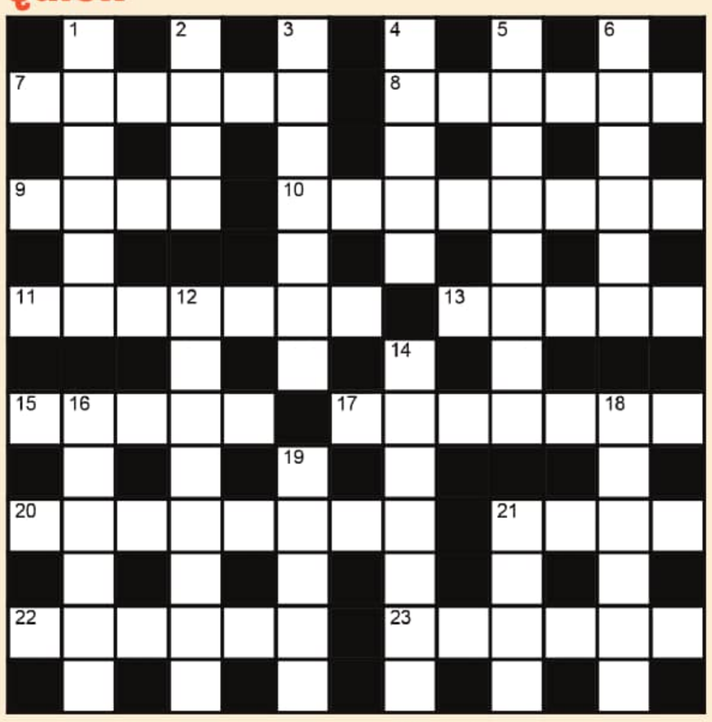
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

7 Strand (6)
8 Tennis legend ___ Nadal (6)
9 Ex-Aussie batsman David __ (4)
10 Extremely loyal or orthodox? (4-4)
11 Shores or coastlines (7)
13 Biblical outcast (5)
15 Occurrence (5)
17 Sentry (4-3)
20 Tourist destination famous for white water rafting (8)
21 Wild country (4)
22 Ahead; not lagging behind? (2,4)
23 Societies or associations (6)

DOWN

1 Important city in Pakistan (6)
2 Brought into existence (4)
3 Worked with wool (7)
4 Scam (5)
5 Ball from a spin bowler (3-5)
6 Fool or deceive (6)
12 Expanding parts of parachutes? (8)
14 Baseball feat (4,3)
16 Capital of Austria (6)
18 Not famous or acclaimed (6)
19 Emotional states (5)
21 Lure or entice (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: T EQUALS Y

SQENK TGS'CR KGWE TGSI IRJSEMENGQ, TGS QRCRI IRM-KNVR PXME M ZSIURQ NE PMW.

Linemaro

Who took the stars out of the sky and put them in your yes?

Mindchow

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge

Joke of the day

Fools rush in and get the best seats

Loop

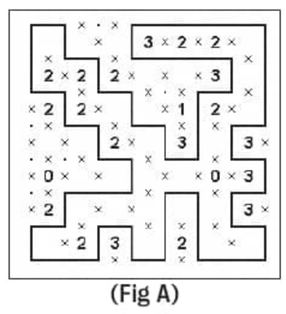
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

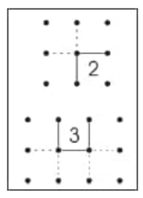
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

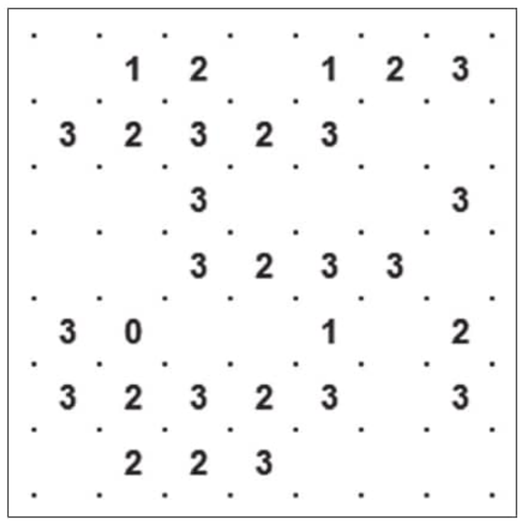
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



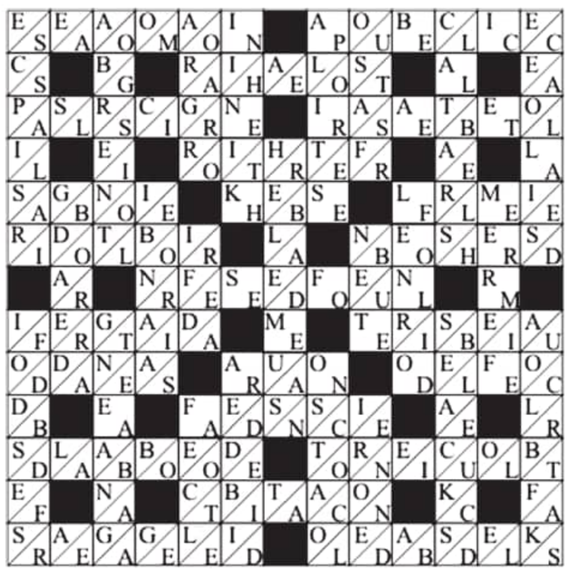
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



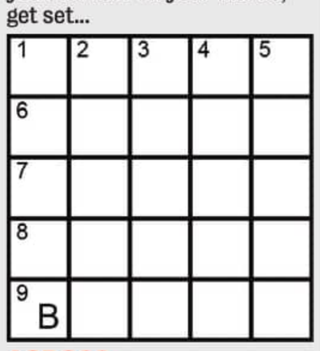
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

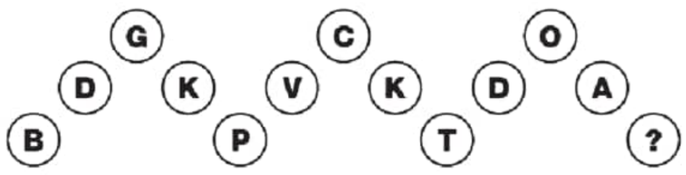
1 Rid at; 6 O Hell;
7 Riles; 8 Kayos;
9 By Ill

DOWN

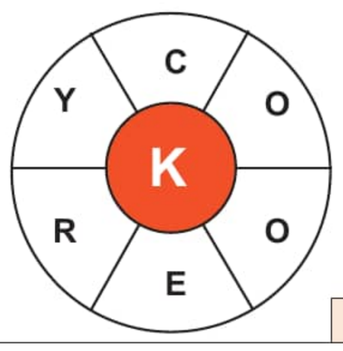
1 Broth; 2 Irk ie;
3 Leal I; 4 Ally L;
5 Y Sods

Mensapuzzle

Which letter completes the puzzle?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

08 Average; **09** Good; **11** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

	6			8			2	
		2	3		7	1		
	5		4		6		7	
6			9		2			7
1								2
9			7		3			1
	8		6		4		1	
		7	8		5	4		
	4			3			9	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

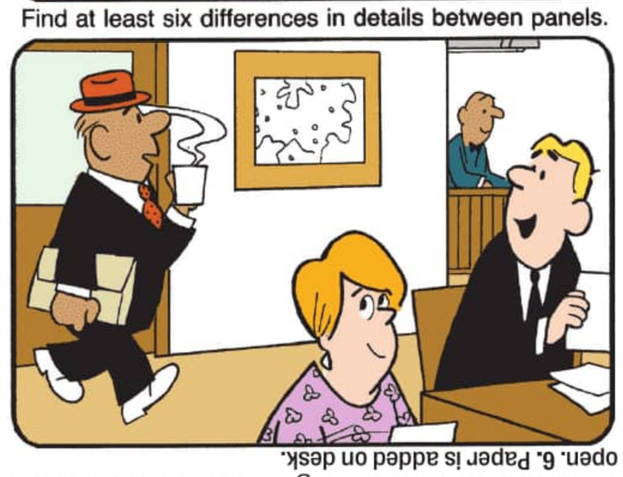
Easy = 17
1 5 5 8

Medium = 13
1 2 4 4

Hard = 8
2 3 4 5

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



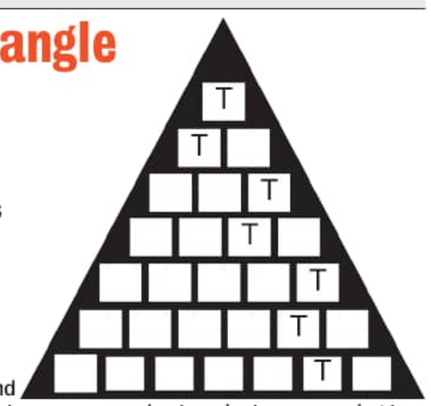
Differences: 1. Briefcase is larger. 2. Desk is not as wide. 3. Back of chair is not showing. 4. Wall is wider. 5. Mouth is open. 6. Paper is added on desk.

Riddler

Each group of three definitions describes three words that are spelled the same, except for one letter (each group describes a different set of words). Example: king, ring, wing. **1a)** finished, **1b)** to sleep lightly & **1c)** a measured quantity **2a)** covered, **2b)** mollusk & **2c)** applaud **3a)** furtive, **3b)** to secretly observe & **3c)** an enclosure for pigs **4a)** to direct, **4b)** costume & **4c)** duplicity

Alpha triangle

1 Terabyte
2 Bye!
3 Took a load off ?
4 Cricket sticks
5 Brag
6 Swells or inflates
7 Votes

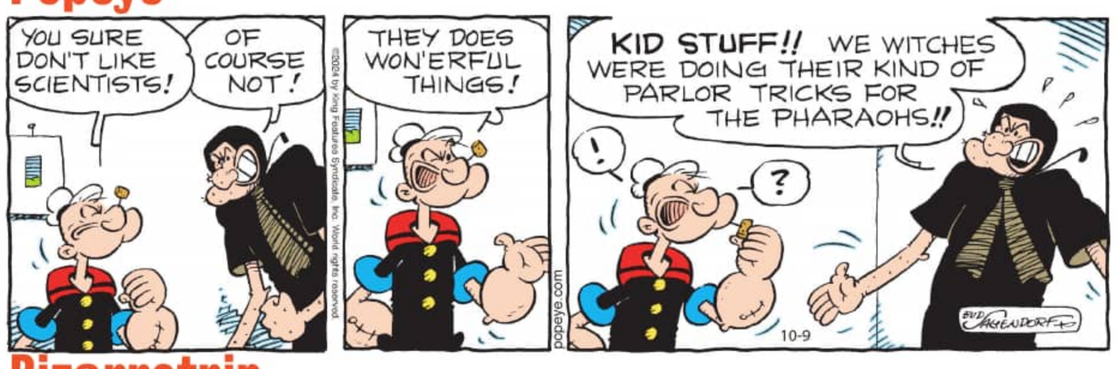


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

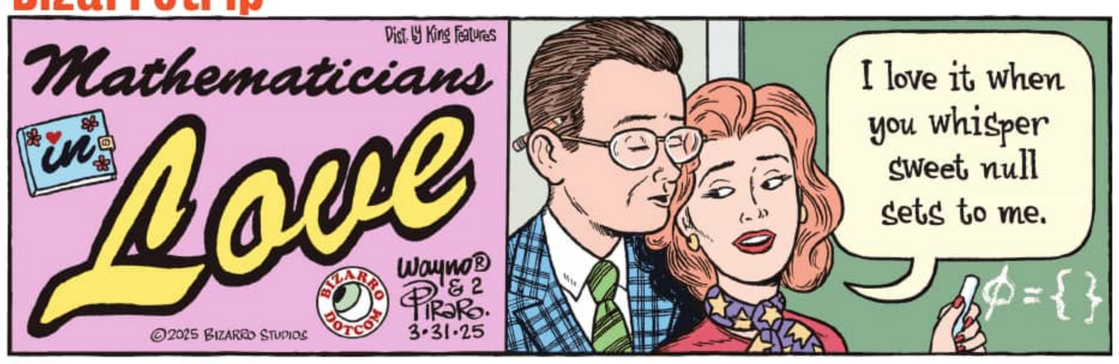
DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye

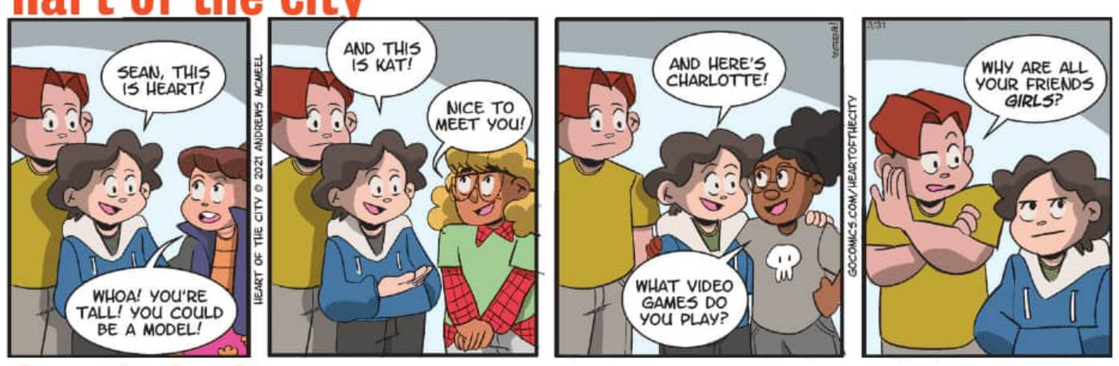


Bizarrotrip

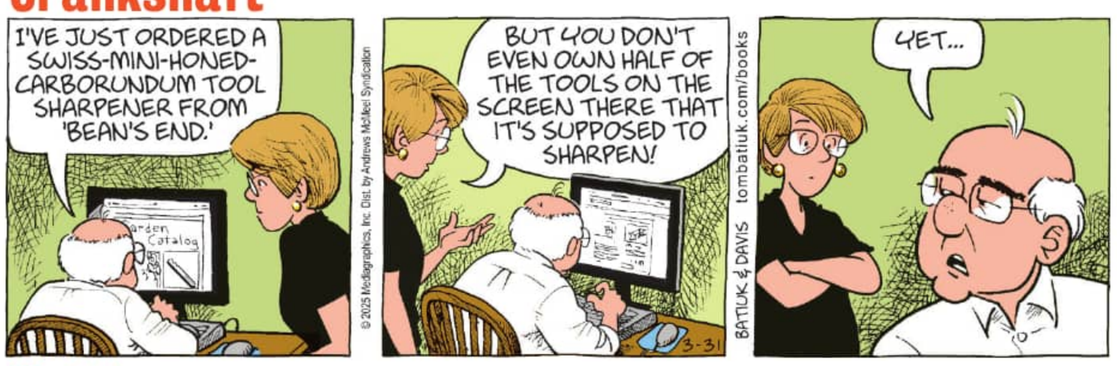


Diamond Lil

Hart of the city



Crankshaft



Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today begins with a sense of calm. You're not in a rush, and this measured approach will reflect positively in your work style. Postponed tasks and goals may finally see progress with a little help from destiny. At home, your patience will help maintain harmony. Minor health concerns related to the skin or stomach may arise—take care of your diet and routine.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Negative thoughts may weigh you down today, leading to feelings of dullness or hesitation. Arrogance and impatience might interfere with decision-making. Seek guidance and blessings from elders—they could provide the clarity you need. Avoid investing in stagnant or unproductive assets. Couples should steer clear of revisiting unpleasant memories or arguments.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
A productive day lies ahead. Your performance at work is likely to impress superiors, possibly leading to added responsibilities or a promotion. Conflicts with a partner may be resolved, bringing relief. Financially, you may consider taking a loan to invest in property or assets. Children's health improves, and you may make some financial plans for their future.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
The Moon's blessings bring harmony today. Love and affection will thrive in your personal life—singles may find a potential match. Professionally, you'll perform well with solid support from colleagues and friends. Investing in gems or jewellery could bring future gains. Just be mindful of elderly family members' health.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Positive planetary support brings joy and a boost to your confidence. The moon will be supportive. Your enthusiasm will help you gain respect from those around you. It's a good day for learning or exploring intellectually stimulating topics.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
The day may start on a slow or dull note. However, things will improve by evening. New contacts at work may help you revise or expand your business plans. If signing any contracts or documents, read them thoroughly before proceeding.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, divine guidance may help you overcome indecisiveness. Children's health improves, and work support from colleagues helps you meet goals efficiently. You may even receive incentives or a bonus. Those working in sectors like dairy, water management, grains, art, or homemaking are likely to see good results.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
You'll be focused on domestic matters today. A growing interest in art, movies, fashion, or design may enhance your creativity. Purchases related to home decor or artefacts could improve your social image. You'll feel more polite and relaxed in interactions. A family trip or outing may be on your mind.

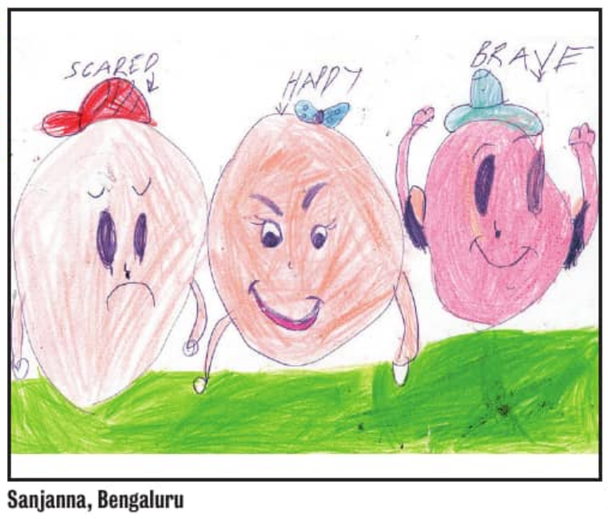
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
You'll feel energetic and confident, especially after a restful night. While your mood is upbeat, be cautious when making financial or academic decisions—avoid rushing into anything. Romantic moments with your spouse are likely, though occasional issues of pride may arise. Stay patient to preserve harmony.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Overspending could take a toll on your finances today. Be mindful of your words both at work and at home. Avoid lending money or making major decisions related to real estate or long-term assets. Stay committed to your responsibilities and don't shy away from them.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today, your strong network may help you implement your business ideas successfully. Your practical wisdom will aid in generating profits. Domestic life remains peaceful, with good understanding between you and your partner. Those involved in metal, trading, or booking services may see excellent progress.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
You're feeling passionate and driven at work today. However, it's best to strike a balance between emotion and logic when making important decisions. Follow your intuition, especially regarding job offers, investments, or business deals. Although the workload may be high, blessings from elders will help you manage the day effectively.

KIDZONE



Sanjanna, Bengaluru

Samarath, Bengaluru

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Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
Least Common Multiple of 4 & 7 = 28.
999÷28 = 235×28+19.
So, the required number is
999 - 19 = 980

QUOTE UNCODE
Until you've lost your reputation, you never realize what a burden it was.

BULL'S EYE
coke, cook, cooker, corky, crook, rock, rocky, rook, yoke

FAST FIVE

T	R	I	A	D
H	E	L	L	O
R	I	E	L	S
O	K	A	Y	S
B	I	L	L	Y

STRIKE OUT

S	E	A	M	A	N	■	P	U	B	L	I	C	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

QUICK

A	■	S	■	S	■	N	■	T	■	G	■	■	■	■
I	N	L	E	A	D	■	U	N	I	O	N	S	■	■
N	■	I	■	O	■	R	■	A	■	■	U	■	■	■
K	E	M	P	H	O	L	E	■	B	U	S	H	■	■
I	■	O	■	M	■	■	■	■	■	■	N	■	■	■
E	V	E	N	T	■	L	O	O	K	O	U	T	■	■
A	■	D	■	H	■	E	S	■	L	E	P	E	R	■
B	E	A	C	H	E	S	■	L	E	P	E	R	■	■
R	■	T	■	D	■	R	■	D	■	■	■	■	■	■
B	O	O	N	■	T	R	U	E	B	L	U	E	■	■
H	■	R	■	I	■	A	■	F	■	L	■	■	■	■
M	A	R	O	O	N	■	R	A	F	A	E	L	■	■
L	■	B	■	K	■	F	■	O	■	D	■	■	■	■

MENSA PUZZLE
N. Start on the left, and move to the right. Letters advance through the alphabet in steps of 2, then 3, then 4 etc.

RIDDLER
1) done, doze, dose,
2) clad, clam, clap,
3) sly, spy, sty &
4) guide, guise, guile

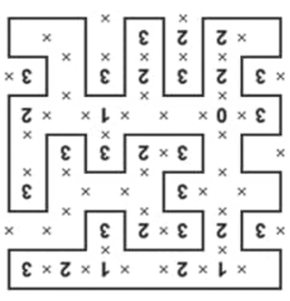
SUDOKU

7	6	3	1	8	9	5	2	4
4	9	2	3	5	7	1	8	6
8	5	1	4	2	6	3	7	9
6	3	5	9	1	2	8	4	7
1	7	4	5	6	8	9	3	2
9	2	8	7	4	3	6	5	1
3	8	9	6	7	4	2	1	5
2	1	7	8	9	5	4	6	3
5	4	6	2	3	1	7	9	8

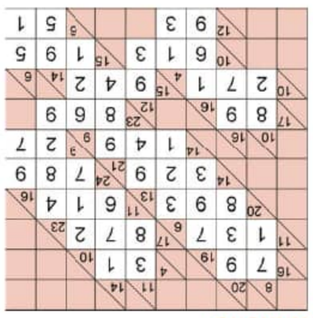
ALPHA TRIANGLE
T, Ta, Sat, Bats,
Boast, Bloats,
Ballots.

GO FIGURE
Easy
8 + 5 − 1 + 5 = 17
Medium
2 × 4 + 4 + 1 = 13
Hard
3 − 4 + 5 × 2 = 8

LOOP



KAKURO



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